

Ohio Department of Youth Services NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
Thursday, December 13, 2007

Contact: Andrea Kruse
614 466-9854 / 614 395-2122
Andrea.Kruse@dys.ohio.gov

Ohio Receives Grant Targeting Mental Health Improvement in Juvenile Justice System from the MacArthur Foundation

COLUMBUS, December 13, 2007 – Ohio has been selected as one of four states to participate in a national and statewide collaborated effort to reform mental health services for youth involved in the state’s juvenile justice system. Ohio was chosen in a highly competitive process by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to participate in the Models for Change action network to improve mental health services for young offenders.

“About 70 percent of youth in contact with the juvenile justice system have suffered with a mental health disorder. We have to improve the level of service offered to this population,” said Department of Youth Services Director Tom Stickrath. “We anticipate that the Models for Change grant will allow Ohio to find new ways to identify and treat youth involved in the juvenile justice system with serious mental health needs and ultimately develop a more effective juvenile justice system.”

“Ohio enjoys a national reputation as a leader in successful collaborative efforts on mental health issues among the courts and agencies in the executive branch,” said Justice Evelyn Lundberg Stratton of the Supreme Court of Ohio. “More than half of all the mental health courts in the nation are in Ohio. This grant will allow our juvenile courts to build on this strong foundation.”

Ohio will implement the grant through the collaboration of several state and local partners including the Ohio Supreme Court, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Addiction Services, the Department of Youth Services (DYS), Summit County Juvenile Court, and the Department of Mental Health (DMH). "Access to effective treatment will provide these kids the tools they need for success." says DMH Director, Sandra Stephenson.

Ohio joins 11 other states providing leadership as part of MacArthur’s \$120 million Models for Change, a national initiative to reform juvenile justice across the country in areas like mental health and minority overrepresentation. Through Models for Change, Ohio will receive assistance to implement successful and sustainable models of mental health care for the juvenile justice population.

“With momentum for reform already growing across the country, the action network will help accelerate the pace of change to improve mental health services for youth offenders,” said MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton. “Innovative state leaders, such as those in Ohio, are reshaping juvenile justice systems across the United States to improve the lives of young people in ways that the public supports and that keep communities safe.”

The first year of the three year grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation will be the assessment phase providing approximately \$100 thousand for support. Budgets for years two and three will be based on the cost of supporting implementation of the plans and programs developed in the first year.

##